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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 001367

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [HR](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA EAGER FOR MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN PSI

REF: A. STATE 142212

[B](#). ZAGREB 1245

Classified By: EconOff Joshua Harris for reasons 1.5 (b&d).

SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST

[1](#). (C) The GoC solidly supports the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). In two recent meetings, key foreign ministry interlocuteurs have requested US views on modalities for intelligence sharing under PSI as well as US advice in organizing the GoC's own National PSI Coordinator Office. The GoC has also offered to participate or even host PSI-related military exercises either under the umbrella of the Adriatic Charter or as a broader regional exercise. The GoC has also expressed interest in exploring bilateral boarding and non-overflight clearance agreements with the US. Post requests Department guidance in responding to these offers for an expanded role for Croatia in the PSI. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

HIGH-LEVEL SUPPORT SQUARELY BEHIND PSI

[2](#). (SBU) On July 22, Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs in the MFA Tomislav Vidosevic called acting PolEcon Chief to his office as a follow-on to refuels to express personally the GoC's eagerness to participate in PSI. Vidosevic affirmed that strengthening Croatia's involvement in PSI is a central task of this government as part of its objective to play a constructive role in the region. Vidosevic stressed that Croatia sees PSI as a clear step towards Euro-Atlantic integration, even as Croatia seeks to maintain its position within SE Europe.

[3](#). (C) Vidosevic said that the GoC is working to organize itself better to participate more fully in PSI, through improving horizontal communication among MFA, MinDef, MinFin, MinInt, and intelligence services. He said he had invited senior Polish officials -- including the Polish National Coordinator for PSI -- to come to Zagreb in September for a "trilateral exchange of views" with US representation. In response to our question on what type of US participation he envisioned, Vidosevic backed off, saying that he wanted to postpone a visit from Washington until more concrete preparations had been completed.

[4](#). (SBU) In response to our observation that PSI could meld well with Croatia's involvement in the Adriatic Charter regarding maritime issues and interdiction, Vidosevic suggested joint training exercises in the region could work within the A-3 framework. He added that while the GoC was very keen to see the US included, he realized the initiative would have to come from the A-3 themselves.

CROATIA TAKES STOCK OF PSI PROGRESS TO DATE

[5](#). (SBU) Prior to the Vidosevic meeting, on July 7 we took stock with Drazen Hrastic, Head of Department for Cooperative Security and GoC POC for PSI, of Croatia's progress to date on the five objectives outlined by U/S Bolton in Lisbon in April.

[6](#). (SBU) SUPPORT: Croatia has already issued a statement of support and remains enthusiastic for GoC participation in PSI.

[7](#). (C) LEGISLATION: Hrastic believes the legislative review could be conducted in parallel with Croatia's acquis implementation program in which police interdiction competencies could be extended in line with PSI guidelines. The MFA recently produced an internal policy document recommending both the establishment of an inter-ministerial body with authority over not just legislative review but day-to-day operations and closer cooperation with other PSI countries. In terms of intelligence sharing, Hrastic asked how we would like to see intelligence resources reallocated within PSI.

[8](#). (SBU) CONTACT: Drazen Hrastic will be the working level PSI contact at least until an inter-agency coordination body is up and running. The appropriate rank of a full-time PSI coordinator will be determined in collaboration with Poland and the U.S.

19. (C) AGREEMENTS: GoC is prepared to consider both a boarding agreement and an overflight denial agreement and asked if we could produce any sample agreements previously concluded with other countries. At the Vidosevic meeting, we responded that the US will likely focus efforts on concluding agreements with the most problematic flag-of-convenience countries as a first priority and that an agreement with Croatia would likely be considered in subsequent rounds of

such negotiations. Hrastic noted that Croatia could be of more assistance interdicting foreign-flagged vessels in Croatian territorial waters rather than Croatian-flagged vessels in international waters.

10. (C) TRAINING: Croatia is willing to host an induction training exercise both to further PSI participation but also to fulfill Croatia's MAP obligations. Hrastic noted that Croatia will certainly observe any training exercises in the region but would like to participate if its capacity permits.

COMMENT

11. (C) Croatian participation in PSI clearly has solid high-level political support -- as Assistant Minister Vidosevic's meeting request demonstrates. Yet despite broad promises to press ahead with training exercises and interdiction agreements, Croatia may find its enthusiasm outstrips its resources. As Hrastic himself summed it up: "It's not a question of willingness but capacity." Within our larger priorities, we should tap this enthusiasm by seriously considering supporting any follow-up ideas presented by the GoC for hosting PSI-related exercises. END

COMMENT.

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